1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

888 In time of war, old people die in great numbers. During moments of panic, they are hidden in the wood, in the palm-tree swamps, while all the able-bodied population run away. They are killed by the enemy, who spares no one (it is the law of war), or they die in their hiding-places of misery and hunger!

As may be seen, the eve of life is very sad for the poor Thonga. There are however children who, to the end, show much devotion to their parents. The most to be pitied are those who fall to the charge of remote nephews or cousins. They can only repeat in a broken voice the sad refrain : " Ba hi shanisa! " — " They treat us very badly! "

G. DEATH

1. *The last days.*

763 313 834 761 Manyibane, the headman of a big village near Rikatla, is dangerously ill. The men of his kraal, his friends, have come to inquire about the illness (kamba shinyonga) and have learned that it is serious. They issue this order to all the inhabitants : " Tlulan pailawen! " — " Keep each of you in his sleeping place, (viz. the men to the right of the hut, the women to the left) and have no more relations. It is taboo! The man would die! " Should visitors come, they are not allowed to enter the village. They must have kept " pure " for two days at least. Two sticks are planted on either side of the door of the hut, and a third is put over them so as to close the entrance. " It is the way black people have of making their proclamation, " says Mooza. " Everybody will know that a dying man is there and nobody will come in. " Should another man of the village have had relations with the same woman as the patient, he is doubly prohibited from seeing him, because the patient would break out into perspiration and die immediately. This is the great law of *matlulana*, as we shall see.

754 Of course the *ñanga* (doctor) has been called already. He

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

763 Some ethnographers have adopted the "embryonic explanation" to account for this custom, which is found all through primitive humanity, from the Mousterian age down to the first inhabitants of Egypt, and amongst a great many uncivilised tribes all over the earth (1). They say: "Primitive man placed the corpse in the attitude of the child before birth because he believed that death is but a new birth, the beginning of a new life..." I asked Viguet if he thought this to be the true original [843] explanation. He told me he did not know ; he would not deny it. But there is one fact which prevents its acceptance ; the Thongas have never done any dissection, and are ignorant of the position of the foetus in the womb. So probably are all primitive peoples. This kind of knowledge came much later in the evolution of mankind. The intention of this rite is more probably to place a dying man in the sitting position which a Thonga generally adopts when in his hut, as the grave is *but a hut in the earth* and he is meant to continue his life in it exactly as before. All the other burial rites confirm this explanation, as we shall see.

Manyibane is dead... In some districts they see that he does not die with *closed hands*. It is taboo, because then the children of the dead will quarrel (Viguet). They close his eyes and take away all his clothes. In the Mpfumo clan, they *wash the body*. Afterwards they cover him with an old rug. No one cries. Lamentations are absolutely prohibited before the burial is over ; it is taboo. It would " break the back " of the men who have to perform the funeral rites.

764 Should there be *strangers* in the village when the death takes
761 place, they will run away quickly to avoid defilement ; otherwise
783 they would have to take part in all the purifying ceremonies of the following days.

372 Without delay, the *fire* which was burning in the funeral hut is removed and carried out into the square. It must be carefully kept alight. This is a taboo. Should there be rain, it must be protected. All the inhabitants must use this fire during the next five days. It will be put out by the doctor, with sand or water, on the day of the dispersion of the mourners. He will then

(1) See my paper in *Anthropos* Sept. 1910 : " Two burials at twenty thousand years distance."

I: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

764 light a new one, and everyone will take from it embers to kindle
761 his own fire in the different huts. It is one of the conditions of the purification of the village.

783 The same day young people are sent to all the relatives in
262 the neighbourhood to announce the death. Even the relations who are absent far away, in Johannesburg, must be informed; this is done in the following way. Someone takes a handful of grass, lights it and, when it is on fire, throws it in the direction of the absent one, saying: "Your brother, here, is dead. Do not fear. May your enemies (viz. your white employers) have consideration and love for you, that you may find sleep and health."

II. *The grave.*

764 The men of the village then go out to dig the grave. They choose a place behind the hut of the deceased or somewhere further off in the little forest which generally surrounds the village; or in the *ntimu*, the sacred wood, if he were one of the guardians of the forest (1), one belonging to the elder branch of the family.

First of all the diggers see that a tree is near the grave on which to hang some of the belongings of the deceased (those which will be kept but will have to be purified); they dig a hole of about six feet in length, four in width, and two and half or three deep. This first hole can be dug with ordinary hoes. Then, at the side of it, they excavate a second hole, more or less circular in form, using for this a light wooden board, generally the rim of an old basket. The sides of the hole are well smoothed by means of this instrument. In the Northern clans they sometimes smear it with mud taken from the river; they also put a reed beside the corpse, and grass, which grew in water, is spread at the bottom of the grave (2). So the grave, is in a way, double. It presents

(1) In the Southern clans the grave of the husband or the wife is dug in front of the hut in which they were living (as this hut is to be abandoned); in the case of a child, he will be buried at the side of the hut (as, in this case, the hut will not be destroyed.) The grave is surrounded by a fence made of sticks and plastered with clay. Thus people will remember where the corpse has been buried.

(2) Compare this custom with the rite of burying little children and twins in wet soil.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1900)1927 Thonga

764 775 two levels, the higher, the large hole, gives access to the smaller, the circular ovoid grave. The first is called *the square* (hubo) of the deceased, the second is *his hut* (yindlu or shinyatu). He will dwell in the hut, but come out from it and sit in his square underground, just as he did when living in his village (1). (Elias.)

764 787 When the grave has been duly dug, the diggers call the relatives to inspect their work, and show them that their deceased relation has been well cared for. The lower grave, being excavated in the wall of the higher, forms a kind of vault. It seems as if it were considered necessary that the earth which will protect the head should not be disturbed. When all the mourners have come at the call of the diggers, it sometimes happens that the vault of the grave falls in. This is a very bad sign. The cause of the accident is this ; either the person who has bewitched the deceased is present or, amongst the assistants, there is one who has been guilty of " matlulana " against him (2)! The grave is a *mondjo*, a magical means of divination.

III. *The burial.*

764 761 The diggers may be four in number, but they are generally only two ; the master of the mourning (nwinyi wa nkosi), who is the brother next to the deceased, and another younger, near relative, for instance a son. Both must be married, because married people alone can get rid of the defilement of death by the " lahla khombo, " which we shall explain later. Should an unmarried son be asked to undertake the work of burial, he

(1) In some clans of the North there is only one hole and no excavation at the side. But what I have described here is the rule amongst the Ba-Ronga, except where civilisation has already modified the old custom.

(2) On this point Mboza and Elias did not agree. Mboza said that the falling in of the grave can only be caused by the presence of the wizard who killed the deceased. Elias asserts that the same accident happens if one of those present has *tjemakanya* the deceased, viz. crossed his way, that is to say has had sexual relations with the same woman as the deceased. (This is matlulana). As the hut of the deceased knew this man, so his new hut in the ground recognises and reveals him !

764 761 would answer : " How can you propose such a thing to me ? Am I not immature (mbisi, properly raw) ? I am not yet ripe! Is defilement of death not there ? With whom could I wash it away ? " (Viguet). The first digger is also called " the one of the head, " the second, " the one of the feet, " because one of them will carry the corpse by the head, the other by the feet. Women may also bury a corpse upon occasion.

764 So the grave-diggers go back to the hut and begin to wrap the corpse in his rugs and in his mat (ku tjimba). They stitch the mat twice (to prevent it from slipping ?) (Viguet). They generally wait till sunset to perform the burial. When the time has come, they make a hole in the wall of the hut on the right side, as the husband dwells in the right half of the house, the wife in the left half. The corpse must not be carried out of the hut by the door, but by that artificial opening (1). So he leaves the hut head foremost (2). They sometimes stop up their noses with the leaves of a bush called ngupfana, which has a strong scent, in order not to perceive the smell of death (moya wa lifu). They march slowly, without a word, men and women following them silently. The " one of the head " goes down to the first level, the one of the feet follows him. They have already put in the 764 778 769 place for the head a piece of wood, a piece of a branch of *nkanye*, their sacred tree, one foot long and three inches broad, to be used as a pillow. At the bottom, on the soil, they stretch some old rugs. They lay the corpse down (3) on its left side, the head on the pillow. The grave has been dug in such a way that its long axis is directed towards that cardinal point whence the ancestors came, so that the deceased, having his head slightly

(1) In the Hlahi clans, the corpse is carried through the door, but the plaster on both sides of the door (marimba) is beaten and falls down. It will be repaired later on. In the Northern clans the hut of the deceased is not so strongly tabooed as amongst the Ba-Ronga. When it has been purified it will be used again.

(2) Comparative Ethnography : In Switzerland it is a common saying that a corpse must leave the house feet foremost.

764 513 (3) The Ba-Ngoni place their dead in the grave in the sitting position, a knife in their hands, as they are a race of murderers! (Viguet). It may be that the reclining position given to the corpse by the Ba-Ronga, is the result of an evolution. At any rate, this is not the true sleeping position, as Natives generally do not bend their limbs when sleeping.

764 769 we may remain in peace. He did not leave us in anger. Let us mourn him gently, in peace. Let us help each other to mourn him well, even our parents-in-law from amongst whom he has taken his wife." It may be that he forgets to say something which ought to be said ; then some of his hearers remind him quietly of the omission and he adds the words to his prayer.

764 *The wailing* (ku djila nkosi). As soon as he has finished praying, those present commence crying ; the wailing begins. The women get to their feet and shout loudly, throwing themselves on the ground. The wife of the deceased cries more than any one else : "I remain alone in the lonely plain (libalen). Where have you gone? You have left me." The wailing generally starts on a very high note and finishes a little lower, expressing the pain of the heart in a touching, penetrating manner. Here is one of these sentences, which can hardly be called a song. I heard it in 1893 at the burial of a young woman who was found drowned in the lake of Rikatla.

O my mother ! O my mother ! You have left me, where have you gone? ! (1)

The parents-in-law lament over their daughter, the new widow. Everyone then begins to lament over his own relations who have recently died. The brothers weep together without shouting. They say : "You have gone first. We shall soon follow you, because there is attraction in death."

It is during the mourning that pots, handles of assagais, etc. are broken over the grave.

761 Let us stop a little while at this point.

783 765 We have seen enough already to observe that, for the Thongas, death (lifu) is not only a sad event, a great cause of pain on account of the bereavement, but a dreadful contaminating power which puts all objects and people in the neighbourhood of the deceased, all his relatives, even those dwelling far away, working in Johannesburg for instance, into a state of uncleanness. This uncleanness is very dangerous indeed. It kills, if not properly treated. All are not affected in the same way. There are concentric circles round the deceased : the widows are the

(1) See for the notes of this song Part V. Ch. III. B.

1: Junod M-5 (1895 ;09)1927 Thonga

765 inner circle and will undergo a very rigorous purification ; the grave
783 diggers come next ; then the inhabitants of the bereaved village, the
761 relations residing in other villages, even the relatives of the wives of the
834 deceased. All these being unclean are placed beyond the pale of
839 society : "Muti wu tjumile," "the village is dark," is the technical expression. This marginal period lasts longer for those who are most affected ; one year and more for the widows, one month for the village, five or six days only for the mourners from outside. But there are many taboos in connexion with this period. Sexual relations are severely prohibited amongst married people, but the *gangisa* is not so strongly objected to, at any rate in some districts. We shall also meet with the aggregation rites by which re-entry into the ordinary mode of life is secured. The funeral rites may last for one year and are very complex. There are three great moments in the sequence of these rites : 1) *The Great Mourning* which lasts a few days, just after the burial, generally only five days. Here the purification is essentially medical and aims at cleansing the persons and the objects which were directly in contact with the deceased. 2) *The sexual rites* which tend to purify the collective life of the village by the removal of its defilement. 3) *The family rites*, consisting in gatherings of all the relatives, and accompanied by religious ceremonies. These seem to aim at restoring the life of the family, viz. of the social group, which has been diminished by the death of one of its members.

768 This general sequence is found in all the clans. But the rites themselves differ greatly ; I shall try to depict these differences clearly. My information is more complete as regards the Ronga clans, but I owe to Viguet some entirely new and very interesting material regarding the Hlabi rites.

IV. *The Great Mourning of the first five days.*

1) The Great Mourning amongst the Ba-Ronga.

764 Just after the burial, all the inhabitants of the village go to
783 the lake or the river to bathe. The grave-diggers nibble a
[824] *ndjao*, the root of a juncus which has magical power. Special rites will then be performed for the widows. We shall describe

769 The bones of the dead are never disinterred. It is a taboo ; grave is respected and women do not dare to till the ground over it. Often one comes across a small thick bush in the midst of mealie gardens, and one sees broken pots under the branches. It is an old grave. Later on, when no one remembers who has been buried there, agriculture regains its sway. If a bush fire has reached the sacred wood and damaged it, the person who lit it must atone by sacrificing a fowl in order to "quench" (timula) it.

REMARKS ABOUT DEATH AND BURIAL

761 These very complicated funeral rites of the Thongas clearly show the 783 existence of three great intuitions in their minds :

1) Man is immortal and becomes a god through dea[illegible]

775 2) There is extreme danger attached to the defilement which accompanies death. This uncleanness contaminates the community and can only be removed by collective purification.

3) The social group, being diminished by death, must be reinforced by special means (family gatherings, choice of a successor, etc.). Hence three categories of rites : *religious*, *purificatory* and *social*.

On the other hand some of the rites we have described present unmistakably the character of *passage rites*, because death also means a passage : for the deceased, passage from the world of the living to the world of the dead ; for his relations, passage from one phase of life to another.

764 Separation from terrestrial life is symbolised for the deceased by the 775 rite of piercing the wall of the hut in order to solemnise, as it were, his official departure from his former dwelling. I should consider also as a separation rite the custom of cutting through all his garments and mats, in order to make them "draw the last breath." To effect aggregation to the new world, the grave-diggers prepare for him an underground hut and square place, they place him in his new dwelling in a sitting position (if such is the true explanation of the folding of the limbs), they direct his eyes towards the cardinal point whence his 765 ancestors have come. I have sometimes had the impression that even 775 in these rites, the idea of a marginal period, or of a period of transition, was not lacking : the deceased is not prayed to prior to the great family gatherings, which take place three, six, or twelve months after the death. Then his hut is crushed or closed. It would seem that he has gone

775 through an evolution towards deity, as his corpse was decaying in the
765 grave, and the closing of his hut, with the placing of his shield before the door, might well mean his definite incorporation into the world of the dead, and also a means of preventing him from returning to this world and bringing misfortune to his relatives.

765 As regards the relatives, they separate from the former phase by the
783 cutting of the hair, putting out the old fire, leaving off their clothing and wearing mourning attire. A very distinct period of margin then begins, marked by the sexual taboos accompanying it, and they are aggregated again to the ordinary world and to the new phase of their life by all the ceremonies which I have explained at length. Here, however, as the seclusion was caused by a certain most dreaded defilement, the aggregation rites all bear the character of removal of uncleanness: uncleanness of the food, of the gardens, of the bereaved, chiefly grave-diggers and widows, of the whole community, which is cleansed by the sexual rite of hlamba ndjaka, etc.

797 If classification were equivalent to understanding, we might say that
761 we have fairly well understood the complicated Thonga rites which accompany death... But who can boast of having fully understood so profound and mysterious a subject? Death is the great shadow which hovers over life and chills the human heart. Outside of an enlightened faith, it is, and remains, the King of Terrors. Never more than at the graveside did I pity my poor black brethren, wondering how they tried to calm their hearts and overcome their sorrow. There is something profoundly touching in their most absurd rites, because, after all, they are all imposed by a craving for life and purity. Will my readers allow me to conclude this subject by a personal reminiscence? The day I attended the burial of Sokis, when his relatives had finished filling in the grave, they asked me to lead them in worship. Bantu heathenism is so poor, it feels itself so weak that it readily accepts the help of a higher religion. So I tried to turn the eyes of my hearers away from the underground hut, and to fix them on the eternal dwellings of the Father's house. Then Sokis's youngest brother took the nkanye twig and performed the heathen religious ceremony, calling his ancestors to come and bless them and entreating the deceased to leave them in peace. The contrast between these two prayers made at the same grave was indeed striking. And, whatever we may think, even if we had no religious convictions at all, should we not earnestly desire that, for these people, the bright comforting Christian hope may dispel the darkness of their thoughts and the sufferings involved in their rites?

A woman who has lost many children, three or four, is considered as being in a special position, called *bowumba*, and there are many rules to be observed in order to deal with this "state of bereavement." Should a child be born after the death of many elder brothers, he must be carried in a *ntehe* made of a sheep's skin instead of an antelope or goat skin. (See p. 46.) To carry him in an ordinary ntehe is taboo. Should it be a boy, the mother will put girl's clothing on it, and vice-versa. The mother's breast will be smeared with a special medicine, because they are "breasts of the dead (mabele ya bafi)." The child, if it lives, will be weaned as early as possible and be taken to its grandmother. Two curious rites are also practised to protect it against bad luck. The first is the *kunga*; the second, *rangela bowumba*, seems to belong rather to the Northern clans.

The *kunga* rite which we have already met many times (see p. 124) is also performed in the case of a mother who has given birth to a new child whilst in the state of bowumba. To neglect it is taboo. The bereaved mother keeps silent before her visitors until they have deposited their gifts at her feet and have thus "opened her mouth." Old women having no means to buy a present take a bit of grass and fix it in her hair. Then she consents to speak. She gathers all the bracelets thus obtained and puts them on the ntehe, carrying them everywhere with her.

Another rite is observed in the Northern clans. The child whose elder brothers and sisters have died is taken by the mother to the village of her own parents. There it is buried in the ash-heap up to its neck. Then somebody runs to the village, takes a handful of grains of maize and throws them on the child. Afterwards it is dug up, washed, smeared with ochre and brought home. This rite is called *rangela bowumba*, viz. to *precede* bowumba, to cut it, to treat it: the bowumba will not now come as it has been "preceded". It will be deceived, it will no longer desire the baby, as the baby has been thrown away together with all the refuse of the village on to the ash-heap. It is no longer able to eat mealies, even if it is given grains of mealies; it is dead! Let the bowumba take no notice of it! (This description of the "rangela bowumba" was given to me by an old Thonga from Spelonken. Mankhelu, my Nkuna informant, called this rite

789 761 "*ringela bocumba,*" from the verb ringa, to try ; it is the attempt to bring some influence to bear on the misfortune of the bereaved mother.)

9) Adultery.

837 595 Amongst the Thongas *true* adultery for a *man*, married or unmarried (bumbuye), consists in committing sin with a married woman. Should he have relations with a girl, it leads to no consequences at all. Nobody will blame him, if the girl does not conceive. Should she have a child, he will only be forced to marry her ; she will become his second wife. His first wife will not at all resent his bad conduct. Sometimes she will herself get him the girl he wants. There is nothing in her heart like the jealous dignity of a European spouse! She will keep all her capacity for jealousy (bukwele) for the time when the second wife comes to the village, and shares with her the affection of their common husband! Adultery with an unmarried woman is nothing more than "gangisa."

837 684 692 But should a man have abducted a *married woman*, a woman who has a master (ñwinyi), who has been paid for, then the matter becomes very serious. The husband is very skilful at discovering her misdoing. As soon as he begins to have doubts about the fidelity of his wife, he chooses a friend and asks him to watch her. She is very cunning, her lover also ; but the friend is on the watch and some time perhaps, catches them in the bush, when she goes to gather fuel, or near the pool, where she draws her water. He comes back to the husband and informs him that he has caught them in the very act. Then the husband tells his wife that proof has been obtained and that she had better go at once to her lover and take something from his hut ; she obeys, and comes back with his blanket or any other object. This is "la pièce à conviction." The husband goes with it to the counsellor who is in charge of his village ; together they apply to the chief. The chief sends the counsellor who is responsible for the village of the lover to summon him. The confrontation takes place and the story of the case is investigated.

574/609 travellers be refused the customary hospitality in a village and incur misfortune later on, the chief will make the people of that village responsible and they will have to pay a fine. In Gungunyana's country, warriors were sent to plunder such a village. Lack of hospitality, however, is not considered as a taboo (yila), because "it does not kill ;" it is a bad action (biha).

Now-a-days, customs are beginning to change ; hundreds of young men (magaisa) coming from the towns after working there, pass through the country, and it would be impossible to put them up and feed them all. They sleep on the *bandla* and cook food for themselves, occasionally buying some mealies or a hen from the inhabitants. Moreover they have plenty of money and they can pay !

609/618/761 It must also be added that, if they dispense hospitality liberally, the Thongas can be very hard on people who do not belong to their special clan. Feelings of humanity are sometimes strangely deficient. I heard of a boy of the Manyisa district who had fallen down near the lake of Rikatla, unable to proceed further on account of a bad wound received while working on the railway at Lourenço Marques. Nobody took pity on him because he was of another clan, and he would have died there if a Christian woman, named Lois, had not received him in her village and nursed him. Fear of death and its contamination may partly explain this want of compassion for strangers.

784/643/677 As already mentioned, it was formerly taboo to enter the village square wearing boots. These boots consist of sandals made by the hunters for their long trips through the thorny bush. They were not allowed on the hubo. A subject was not permitted to sit on a mortar or on anything else ; the chief alone could do so, and it was considered a sign of pride to sit on anything but the bare ground!

609/177/574 The habit of offering a concubine to passers-by is never met with amongst the Rongas as it is in other tribes. Now-a-days dissolute women may offer themselves. But they have learnt from white men this new kind of immorality.

On the fate of the Thonga Village, see Practical Conclusions. V.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

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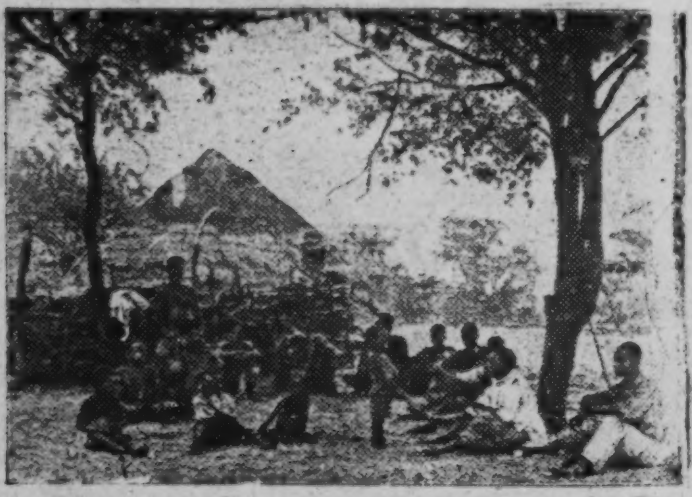
beer is selected, into which is thrown the black powder, the great medicine of the land, called in this case *bahlungu bya miluru*, the powder of the miluru. The nuru, plur. miluru, is the mysterious spiritual influence which a man or a beast killed by the assagais can exert on the slayer, making him lose his head and commit acts of folly, or, at least, have red eyes (shenga mahlo). We shall again meet with this curious conception when



Bukanye drinking near Antioka. (Portuguese East Africa.) *Phot. A. Burd.*

studying the rites of the army and of hunting. All those who are proudly conscious of having killed a man in war must first drink the new beer which has been medicated to keep them from killing any of their compatriots during the ensuing weeks of the bukanye. They approach one after the other, the chief also, if he be a man-slayer. Each of them receives a small calabash, (ntcheko, p. 50) full of the fermented liquid. He jumps and runs in the direction of the entrance, drinks a mouthful, spits it out with *tsu* and says: "Father and mother! May I live! May I hold the calabash! Even to morrow! For ever!" People laugh. He is very happy! Others sing and dance the war dance:

727 They have killed... So they are exposed to the mysterious and
775 deadly influence of the *nuru* and must consequently undergo a
828 medical treatment. What is the *nuru* ? *Nuru* is the spirit of the
783 slain which tries to take its revenge on the slayer. It haunts him
789 and may drive him into insanity : his eyes swell, protrude and
761 become inflamed. He will go out of his mind, be attacked by giddiness (ndzululwan) and the thirst for blood may lead him to fall upon members of his own family and to stab them with his assagay. To prevent such misfortunes, a special medication is required : the slayers must *lurulula tiyimpi ta bu*, take away the nuru of their sanguinary expedition. (Lurulula comes from nuru, plur. miluru (1).

In what does this treatment consist ? The slayers must remain for some days at the capital. They are taboo. They put on old clothes, eat with special spoons because their hands are

764 (1) We met with the notion of *nuru* for the first time à propos of the rite of
775 luma (p. 400) ; we shall find it again when dealing with hunting customs (Part IV).
761 The nuru is to be feared not only in the case of slain enemies but in connexion with any human corpse. As a proof, I may quote the following curious story which Spoon told me and of the truth of which he was fully convinced. A traveller died under the great fig-tree of Libombo (near Rikatla). He had climbed on to the tree and fallen on his own stick, which he had planted in the ground. He was not buried, as no one knew him. So his corpse fell into decomposition on the spot ; his skull became white. Later on a bush fire burnt all the grass and the skull was
764 seen for years "saying mpha" (it was shining), the teeth "saying bva" (descriptive
775 adverb, same meaning). One day the boys of Libombo went to pick wild figs from
755 the tree and again saw the skull. Spoon was one of them. The fire had just passed
789 by again. "We beat it with our sticks and amused ourselves by rolling it over like a
761 ball. We did not know it was a human skull... When we got home we began to be seized by the drunkenness of nuru, the disease of those who have killed a man. During the night we were delirious (hanta-hanteka), our eyes swelled and were full of exudations (malanga), the four of us, Tsukela, Tlabin, Sibakuze and myself. Next morning my uncle went to the fig-tree and saw that we had killed a man there ! The medicine-man who understands the treatment of nuru, Dudela, who had been a slayer in war, called us to his village. We stood in a line before him ; he poured a little of his powder into the hands of each one of us, took a little in his mouth, rubbed his forehead. Then he insulted us saying ; "You will die ! Who began beating that skull ?" Each of us denied having given the first blow. Then he said : "Take care ! Do not go there any more no: near that nkuhlu tree where another corpse has been burnt under the leaves ! Go away."

514 When a man has murdered another in a scuffle, he can replace this nuru medicine
789 by his own urine. He must drink a little of it and rub his forehead with it. The
775 giddiness will pass away. If the murder has been committed from a distance, as with
626 a gun, the nuru is not so much to be feared, as the enemy was far away. A little of
761 the medicine will be sufficient to treat the murderer. Spoon is ignorant of the composition of the nuru drug.

"hot" and from special plates (mireko) and broken pots. They are forbidden to drink water. Their food must be cold. The chief kills oxen for them (yi ba lumisa hi tihomu); but if the meat were hot it would make them swell internally "because they are hot themselves, they are defiled (ba na *nsila*)." If they ate hot food, the defilement would enter into them. "They are black (ntima). This black must be removed" (Mankhelu). During all this time sexual relations are absolutely forbidden to them. They must not go home to their wives. In former times the Ba-Ronga used to tatoo them with special marks from one eyebrow to the other. Dreadful medicines were introduced into the incisions and there remained pimples "which gave them the appearance of a buffulo when it frowns" (1).

After some days a medicine-man comes to purify them (ku ba phutula), "to remove their black." There seem to be various means of doing it, according to Mankhelu. Seeds of all kinds are put into a broken pot and roasted, together with drugs and *psanyi* of a goat. The slayers inhale the smoke which emanates from the pot. They put their hands into the mixture and rub their limbs with it (ba tilula) especially the joints.

Viguet describes this last act thus :—Pieces of medicinal roots are put into the broken pot and roasted. They inhale the smoke. Then cow's milk is poured into the pot on the embers and, when it boils, they have to put their fingers into it, one hand after the other, and pass them across their lips emitting the sacramental : "tsu" (which proves that it is a sacrifice to the gods, a religious act). Afterwards they say : "Phee! phee!" — viz., phephela phansi, (Dj. tikela hansi), "Go down, sink." This means : "May you go deep into the earth, you, my enemy and not come back to torment me." The last part of the treatment consists in rubbing the biceps, the legs, and the whole body with this milk. The medicinal embers are carefully collected, and reduced to a powder ; this will be put into small bags of skin called *tintebe* which the slayer will wear round his neck. They contain

(1) Hence an expression which is still in common use. When a Ronga wants to defy some one he says to him : "You are a coward! If you say you can tackle me come and kiss my forehead."

[i.e., the slayers returned from battle --Analyst]

727 enemy died later on, after his return to his home. Makhani did not
828 know this. One day he became suddenly delirious and rushed about
789 all over the village trying to stab his own people. "Oho!" said those
783 who saw him, "it is because the man he wounded has died!" They at once called the magician who possessed the nuru medicine, a man of the Mapsangamye clan, who came with his calabash. In this calabash there was a carved stick cut from a tree called shiralala, the extremity of which must always remain plunged in the medicine. The magician dipped this stick into a mixture made of honey and the drug, and passed it over the lips of Makhani, who seized it with his tongue, sucking it as the magician moved it from right to left, and licking his lips. A drop of the medicine was then put into each ear, on each upper eye-lid, and below the sternum. He was then cured and, taking a lighted torch, he threw it in the direction of the enemy's country with threatening words: "A ba fe, bafo, ba bola i. e. Let them die, the enemies, let them rot. I will kill still others!" Every day he had to go to the pool and wash his body, treating himself with the tintebe powder.

727 During the weeks following the battle heroes do not only
301 wear the tintebe, besides these miluru amulets, they have the
703 right to wear certain trophies. These are in the first place
554 antelope or goat's horns pierced at the base; they thread a string through the hole thus made and tie them round their necks (See illustrations, p. 33 and 453). They also make necklaces of small pieces of wood, notched in a peculiar manner and burnt in the fire; a hole is made through these and they are strung together like beads and worn round the neck. Sometimes these necklaces are made so long that they are worn as a bandoleer. I recollect seeing the Matjolo warriors returning from their expedition of February 1895: they came to show themselves off to the Whites at Lourenço Marques, gloriously proud of having massacred defenceless women and children whom they had surprised in the early hours of the morning! People threw them pieces of silver which they converted into brandy! (1)

727 (1) The terrible malediction which rests on those who have killed an enemy
775 is well illustrated by the following story which the Rev. C. Maphophe told me of an
761 event that had taken place not long ago in the Shishongi country (Manyisa district). A man of the Ndzindzi family had killed a Ndjao during one of Gungunyana's expedi-

J. SOME REMARKS ABOUT WAR RITES.

177 726 The war rites of the Thongas, whatever may be their origin — and they seem to be a mixture of old Thonga and new Zulu customs, — form a very interesting and complete whole.

643 726 829 The most noticeable are the *national rites*. In war time, the very existence of the clan is threatened, because the chief, the central and vital cell of this organism, is in danger. Hence the readiness of all the warriors to answer to the first call of the *shipalapala*, and to gather round him, "building the circle," which protects him, the whole clan forming a single village and binding itself by the striking ceremonies of *guba* and by patriotic songs, to die for him. Notice that most of the *guba* songs extol the chief. All these customs in which the individual or collective courage is stimulated, the *guba* and the *gila*, are national or social rites directed towards the salvation of the clan. They owe their origin to the national idea.

But war also brings dangers to every warrior. Hence the *protective* rites of sprinkling the mukhumbi with the war-medicine of the clan, or of giving each man some of it to swallow. The rite is inspired by the notion *similia similibus curantur*, the idea being that the warrior, having eaten a small portion of the enemy, will become invulnerable to his blows.

But other rites, especially the war taboos, seem to owe their origin to the *idea of passage*.

726 829 834 The *whole clan* enters upon a special phase as soon as war has been decided upon by the chief, "who gives it" to his warriors. Hence the taboos observed at home, many of which are exactly the same as those of the circumcision school and of the period of mourning. We notice the same contrast already so often mentioned : certain sexual prohibitions are removed (e. g. a queen will enter quite naked into the mukhumbi!)

727 775 761 tions (before 1890). Three persons of that family died. The bones were consulted and the diviner asked : "Have you not slain a Ndjao?" They answered: "Yes." — "Then," said the bone-thrower "you will all die as this man has followed you." The bones showed that, in order to avoid the destruction of their family, the Ndzindzis had to offer a girl to the ghost of the slain, a living sacrifice. This girl would not be allowed to marry, or even to be courted by boys. Should she have relations with a man it would be necessary to replace her by another. Thus the angry ghost would be propitiated.

1:Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

761

[For purification rites performed after the death of a Thonga, see category 765 and 783--analyst]

778 introduced fire and the culinary art into the world! This idea is
826 interesting and seems to show that, to the Native mind, the cooking of food is the pursuit which differentiates man from the animals.

177 In the clans of Maluleke and Spelonken there is a third tradition
773 relating to the first man, but it has certainly been borrowed from the Venda or Pedi tribes. They say the first man was *Rivimbi* and his son *Khudjana* (name transformed into Hobyana according to Thonga phonetics). The Thongas only say that Hobyana is the creator of Heaven and Earth and the first ancestor of the race. But the Vendas and Pedis have a number of traditions about these two heroes (1).

2) The cause of death.

773 When the first human beings emerged from the marsh of
825 reeds, the chief of this marsh sent the Chameleon (Lumpfana)
761 to them, with this message: "Men will die, but they will rise again." The Chameleon started walking slowly, according to his habit. Then the big lizard with the blue head, the Galagala, was sent to tell men: "You shall die and rot." Galagala started with his swift gait and soon passed Lumpfana. He delivered his message, and when Lumpfana arrived with his errand, men said to him: "You are too late. We have already

773 (1) Here is one of the most curious of these traditions, a strange story indeed,
776 when we reflect that these two personages are the great gods who created the uni-
177 verse! Once, in olden times, Khudjana planted a big pole in the earth, and passed spokes through it, right to the top. Rivimbi having climbed up, Khudjana took out the lower spokes and went home. His father being unable to get down, the son stole the food prepared for him and ate it at his ease. Then he again put the spokes in their places and the old man came home. But when he wished to have his meal, he found that nothing was left. His wife then gave him Khudjana's portion!

There is great confusion amongst these traditions. According to Mazkhela this Rivimbi, or Luvimbi, is the same as the great rain-maker to whose descendants he went to obtain the rain medicine (p. 320). He is not only the creator of the earth, but the protector of all men, who are his sons. So, if some one wishes to harm a man who is not guilty, the Vendas say to him: "Do not kill Luvimbi's man." If you steal a partridge caught in a trap which was not set by you, they say: "Luvimbi, who stands on that tree, sees you." He would seem to be a superior being, a god (shikwembu), even the chief of gods, endowed with omnipresence and omniscience. Moreover there is a relation between Rivimbi and Nwali, the Ba-Nyai god, who is represented either as father or son of Rivimbi, or identical with him. It may be that the Rivimbi tradition, which is both Pedi and Venda and seems to refer definitely to a first ancestor who has become the great god, has been mixed with the Nwali tradition, which is Nyai, so that ideas of different origins have been intermingled.

accepted another message." That is why men are subject to death. 773 825

This myth is so strongly believed that shepherds, when they see a chameleon climbing slowly up a tree, begin to tease it, and, when it opens its mouth, throw a pinch of tobacco into it, and are greatly amused to see the poor thing change colour, passing from green to orange, and from orange to black, in agony, to the great delight of the little boys ; they thus avenge themselves on the chameleon! (p. 339). 761

The same story[1] is told amongst the Zulus, and other myths of a similar character are found all over Africa, especially amongst the Ba-Rotsi (1). It would be an interesting study to collect them all, and thus to compile the African Genesis. We should probably find that the origin of man and death are the two great subjects on which the imagination of the Bantus has tried to throw some light, and that, though the moral element is strangely lacking in these myths, yet there is a striking resemblance between them and the Biblical story, where an answer to the same questions is given. 171 773

II. *The various human races.*

Have Bantus a clear idea of the human race? What they call *banhu* in Thonga, *bantu* in Zulu, evidently means "black people," the first inhabitants of the country. The Zulus are regarded, owing to their military ability, as a superior race, not however to such an extent as they themselves believe to be the case! Whatever may be their hostility or repugnance to their fellow blacks, they know that they belong to the same species. I am not sure that they hold this idea regarding White people, who are not *banhu* but *balungu*. 609 829

What is the origin of this word? As it is also used in Zulu (abelungu), the etymology suggested is the verb *ku lunga*, to be right, good. White people would then be correct, nice people, to

(1) Compare *Fet et Vie*. Oct. 1910. Les Origines. A. Jalla.

[1] [about the original cause of death. See p. 350, cat. 116-Analyst]

2: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

the potteress fires her pots (1) (p. 115). Why is this so? No doubt because if married people, who are hot, did it, the fire would become uncontrollable and all the pots would crack. The same reason explains why sexual relations are so strongly prohibited in hunting and fishing. The game or fish would be so wild that it would be impossible to catch it ; big game would probably kill the hunters (p. 61). 834 783 827

This conception of the sexual act explains why certain functions in the ritual must be performed by young children, still without knowledge of sexual matters, or by old women past the time of childbearing and consequently belonging to the asexual class (I. p. 466).

How is it possible to explain, on the other hand, that this act, so severely prohibited on so many occasions, should be the great purifying act by which the community gets rid of the defilement of death and returns to normal life? We have seen that this is the case after the death of an important person in the village as well as when the village itself moves to another place, probably in consequence of defilement by the loss of some of its members. Notice that the sexual act, in order to obtain the desired result, must be accomplished in the ritual fashion, i. e. s. n. i. (I. Annotatio 2 and 13). It would seem that, in the Thonga mind, death defiles not only the belongings of the deceased, his implements, his assegais, even his fire, but also his parents, even the parents of his wife, and above all, those secretions of the genital organs which are the very fountain of their life, and through which the community is maintained and multiplied. They must be cleansed in order that the social group may re-enter upon a normal state. The ceremonies which we have described (I. p. 152-156 and 320-328) are highly significant. Each couple must perform the rite in turn and all must participate in a collective lustration which takes 834 783 761 827

(1) According to the Rev. Ed. W. Smith the same rule is observed in the smelting operations of the Ba-Ila. A little boy and a little girl are put into the kiln when it is about a foot high and they must crack a bean in their mouths and swallow it. We have here a very good example of Bantu primitive philosophy. The innocence or, as we may say, the coolness, of the little ones will prevent the flame from being too fierce and spoiling the whole operation, whilst the slow cracking of the bean will ensure the success of the smelting process (Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking People*, I. p. 205).

834 place at a given spot and according to a given order of precedence.
783 This will bring about the definite restoration of the village and a new and pure life will henceforth be possible.

761 I ought perhaps to offer some excuse for having dwelt at some
827 length on a subject which is generally left alone as indelicate. I hope however that my readers will agree with me that all these physiological conceptions and all these strange customs, far from being of a lascivious or licentious character, denote, on the contrary, a deep and earnest conception of life and an aspiration towards purity which it is most interesting to observe. They are at the same time amongst the most striking manifestations of Bantu Dynamism.

827 Beside these great principles of Thonga physiology, I may
576 mention a few other ideas relating to the various secretions of the human body.

578 *Spitting* (ku thuka) is a sign of want of respect, as we have seen (p. 310). It is especially prohibited in the presence of people who are eating, and if any one should spit, they will insult the culprit, saying to him : "Eat your own shikohlolo!" — When some one expectorates, others present will cover the phlegm with sand, not on account of taboo, but from disgust.

826 *Blood* (ngati, yin-tin) is also instinctively covered with sand, as
791 soon as it has been shed. This is a taboo, because wizards might use it to bewitch you! The charms of the wizards are commonly called *tingati*, bloods.

827 As regards *sweat* (nyuku, mu-mi), although I cannot assert that the idea is universal, I think it is conceived as coming from outside and falling on men like the dew (mbere) on the grass. When they enter a place which is close, Natives say : "There is sweat here." The etymology of this word is *ku nyuka*, to melt.

Excrement (matjimba) is looked upon as disgusting, but there is no taboo in connection with it.

Yawning (yahlamula) is attended with no superstition.

Hiccough (shitikwane) is not feared in children, but very much so in the case of sick people.

Belching (bisa) is sometimes considered as the result of having been bewitched, especially if the patient becomes thin. Magicians

identical with their image. This notion seems to be at the root of 774
the fear they show of being photographed, as we shall see directly.

We see therefore that Thongas are not at all dogmatic on this subject. The soul is at the same time the breath, viz., something of the nature of the wind, the shadow, the image, the external likeness, or fashion of man as opposed to his flesh.

Whatever may be the original notion, they consider the human being as double and capable of unsheathing itself on certain occasions ; their conception on this point may throw more light on their ideas concerning the nature of the soul.

Some believe that the *unsheathing* always takes place during the night and that the soul comes back when its owner awakes ; this is, par excellence, the case in regard to witches, who unsheath by their magical power and bewitch people during the night, as we shall see. But, though the belief is not universal, some think that all souls go away (or die) during sleep. I heard a boy earnestly praying one evening that his soul might come back to him next morning! This is a kind of physiological normal unsheathing which is attended with no bad results. But a pathological unsheathing also exists, and is very dangerous. It may be caused by the photograph of a man being taken. Ignorant Natives [609]
instinctively object to being photographed. They say : "These White people want to steal us (pepula) and take us with them, far away into lands which we do not know, and we shall remain only incomplete beings." When shown the magic lantern, you hear them pitying the men shown on the pictures, and saying : "That is how they ill-treat us when they take our photographs! (1)"

But the great and dangerous parting of soul and body, which 774
causes certain death, is that which wizards operate by their magic 754
charms. We shall study these strange conceptions in Chapter 761
III. They firmly believe that such is the result of witchcraft ; so, when some one is dying, and the divinatory bones have revealed that the disease was caused by a certain *noyi* (witch or wizard), the

(1) The following reflection well illustrates the superstitious fear which Natives have of likenesses of the dead. Before the 1894 war broke out, I had gone to show the magic lantern in remote heathen villages, and people accused me of having caused the disturbance by bringing to life again (pfusha) men who had died long ago.

754 magician shuts him in with the dying man in the hut and gives him
774 the following command : "Bring back the spirit which you have
taken and hidden somewhere." Some magicians, who are more
761 powerful than the wizards, pretend to be able to find the stolen
spirit and so to restore the patient to health. In cases of epilepsy,
or of any psychic trouble attended with unconsciousness, when the
sick person returns to his senses, they triumph : have they not
brought back the soul? But they say that this must be done in
haste. No time must be lost!

775 Lastly, the final unsheathing of personality takes place at death.
The body becomes rotten, but the shadow goes away and continues
its life as a god, shikwembu. The belief in the continuation of life
after death is universal, being at the base of Ancestrolatry, which
is the religion of the tribe. We shall study the ideas relating to the
future life when dealing with the gods.

What Thongas can absolutely not understand is the resurrection of the body. "Mbuti yi fa, yi bola ; homu yi fa, yi bola ; munhu a fa, a bola!" — "The goat dies and rots, the ox dies and rots, man dies and rots!" answers the sceptical Thonga when he hears the story of the resurrection.

On the whole their ideas of future life are not so very different from those of the ancient Greeks, who believed that the human soul went after death to the realm of shadows.

787 *Dreams* are not generally liked by the Thongas. If something
828 they happened to dream really takes place, it "disgusts" them
(nyenyetsa). When a man has seen a woman several times in his dreams, especially if she was pregnant, he will consult the bones. If he dreams that he has relations with her, he may go next day and hit her with a stick. He leaves the stick on the ground and goes away without a word. According to Mboza, this is done to get rid of the obsession, and to prevent the dream from becoming reality. That is the reason, I suppose, why a Christian boy once said to his missionary : "I dream of many people, but I keep quiet!" Amongst Thongas dreams do not seem to play the great part which the animistic theory attributes to them in the formation of primitive beliefs.

case in respect to the story of Ñwahungukuri, which I have published in *Les Ba-Ronga*, p. 312, and in which Heaven is credited with the full knowledge of a hidden crime committed by a murderer. This idea is so far from being an innovation due to European influence that thoughtful Natives all agree that, in former times, it was more usual to attribute death to the power of Heaven. It was a common saying that "Heaven has fallen (ku we Tilo) on such and such a village." Nowadays it is rather the gods, or the wizards, who are believed to cause death.

But this belief in Heaven has not only inspired these sayings, songs, and tales ; it has also given rise to curious customs, a description of which will throw more light on this conception of the Thongas. Their existence proves that we are not here dealing with the "animatic" invention of some person gifted with a vivid imaginstion (p. 366), but with a true tribal belief.

II. *Customs Connected with the Conception of Heaven.*

1) Heaven, Twins and Rain.

This power, which causes lightning and death, also presides, in a very special way, at the *birth of twins*, so much so that the mother is called by the name of "Tilo," — "Heaven," — and the children "Bana ba Tilo," — "Children of Heaven" (1). Now the arrival of two or three babies at the same time is looked upon by the Thongas as a great misfortune, a defilement in respect of which very special rites must be performed. I give the details of these rites as practised in the Zihlahla, Nondwane, and Nkuna clans, as they were described to me by Tobane, Mboza, Mankhelu, etc.

Twins (hahla, or bandjwa, dji-ma) are now both allowed to live. But in former times, one of them, the one which appeared to be the feebler, was always put to death, being left to die of

(1) In our school at Lourenço Marques there was a charming young girl, who was named Nwana-wa-Tilo, Daughter of Heaven, because she had a twin brother.

845 *made Heaven* (a hambi Tilo), to have *carried Heaven* (a rwi Tilo), to
772 have *ascended to Heaven* (a khandjiyi Tilo). This connection
789 established between her and Heaven is clearly seen in the *rain customs* previously described. Notice that the day following the
766 birth of twins is a *shimusi*, i. e. a day of rest. Nobody tills the ground, fearing that it would prevent rain from falling. When the *mbelele* takes place in Nondwane and Zihlahla (p. 318), the half naked women who are sent to clean the wells take with them a mother of twins. This is no doubt in order to show them where the graves of twins are. But there is also another reason. In the sacred wood of Libombo there is a hole into which the woman is put ; her sisters then pour on to her the water which they have drawn from all the wells, till the hole is half full, and the water comes up to her breasts. This will cause the rain to fall. Why is this? No doubt because, the woman of Heaven being wet, Heaven itself will be wet. Spoon did not give this explanation himself, but, when I suggested it to him, he accepted it readily. For the same reason the graves of twins are watered. In certain cases water is poured on the graves of the ancestors also, because rain is attributed both to them and to Heaven, and this watering the graves is meant to induce either Heaven or the ancestor-gods to cause rain to fall. Hence again the precaution taken of burying twins in damp places, and of exhuming them in times of drought if they have been buried in dry ground (1).

845 The connection between twins and Heaven, so clearly to
772 be seen in these customs, appears again in respect to thunder-
821 storms, which, as we shall see, are another manifestation of Heaven.
789 When lightning threatens a village, people say to a twin : "Help us! You are a Child of Heaven! You can therefore cope with Heaven (mi kota Tilo), it will hear you when you speak." So the child

845 (1) In other clans this law is extended to children prematurely born, even though they
761 are not twins, and even to children who have not had the cotton string tied round their waist or who have cut their upper teeth first. On the other hand, among the Nkunas
772 no special connection seems to be established between twins and Heaven. These differences may be explained by the fact that all these abnormal cases were ascribed to
766 Heaven in former times, and the connection has been preserved in the various clans in respect to one or the other of these categories. Note that, in the song of the widows (I. p. 207), the king Heaven appears to have caused the death of the husband; this is another proof that Heaven was formerly considered the most frequent cause of death.

result if hostile feelings already existed between two persons (1). 754

Jealousy alone is sufficient to give rise to the suspicion even without a word having been uttered (2).

The fact of a woman having lost many children is also a reason for suspecting her of being a witch, as the death of a baby is constantly considered as having been caused by its own mother, who wished "to eat it." The fact of belonging to a family of baloyi is also an indication to the same effect, buloyi being hereditary, as we have seen. [761]

But a mere suspicion is not sufficient to warrant action being taken against the suspected noyi. An objective proof, a piece of convincing evidence is required, and this the magicians are asked to supply. The patient's relatives go *to the diviner* who will cast the bones and discover whether the disease is due to witchcraft or not. This consultation is secret, and is merely preliminary. There are, in the sets of bones employed in Thonga divination, some which, 754 787 791

(1) The evangelist Silas G. was one day speaking to Saul N., an elder of his Church, about Church contributions and said: "So and so does not pay his dues. It would be good to show him his duty." Saul answered: "I do not wonder; that man has a bad wife and you are sure to fail in your duty when you have a bad wife." — "No", said Silas. "Everyone ought to pay his contribution. You, for example, would certainly do your duty even if you had a bad wife!" — "Nevertheless I maintain that a wife who behaves badly takes away her husband's courage. Look at your own case, Silas. Your wife does harm to your work as an evangelist. Did she not say the other day when she saw my baby: 'How fat it is! It is like a pumpkin!'" On hearing these words Silas starts! They are an accusation of buloyi. To say that the baby was as fat as a pumpkin showed that the woman who used these words was ready to eat its body during the night; the evangelist's wife was a noyi! An enquiry was at once started to ascertain if she had really pronounced these words, and the whole little Church was upset. Finally the elder was blamed for having brought an accusation of buloyi, which is forbidden in the Native Congregations, and he resigned his office. The evangelist and his wife "became thin" owing to the mental suffering caused by the insinuation of the elder.

(2) I had amongst my evangelists a very active and intelligent man who cultivated large gardens and was well provided with everything. His neighbours began to suspect him for this reason. He said to them: "We ought not to work on Sundays," and this increased their suspicions. "It is evident", they said, "that *he is not alone!* How does he manage to have such splendid harvests when he does not work on Sundays? Surely he has others to till for him. He takes our backs and uses them to cultivate his big fields. And the reason why he has such wonderful crops is that he has taken our own mealies from our gardens by his witchcraft" — "But," said others, "you cannot complain! Mealies are plentiful in your gardens too!" — "No," answered the enemies of the evangelist. "Though you see mealies in our gardens, they are no longer mealies; they have been taken away by him." They meant that, just as a bewitched person is no longer normal but has been emptied of his viscera, so the cereals had been robbed of their virtue by buloyi.